

Shrimp and eggplant beignets

Makes about 2 dozen

1 medium eggplant,
peeled and chopped

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1/2 teaspoon cayenne

2 tablespoons vegetable
oil

1/2 cup chopped onions

1/2 pound small shrimp,
peeled and deveined

3 eggs, beaten

1 1/2 cups milk

2 teaspoons baking
powder

3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

4 cups solid vegetable
shortening

Seasoning mix
(combination of

1/4 teaspoon each salt,
cayenne, black pepper
and garlic powder)

Season the eggplant with 1/2 teaspoon of the salt and 1/4 teaspoon of the cayenne. Heat the 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the eggplant and cook, stirring, until slightly soft, 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the onions and cook, stirring, until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the shrimp and cook until the shrimp turn pink. Remove skillet from heat and set aside to cool.

Combine the eggs, milk, baking powder, and the remaining one teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon cayenne in a mixing bowl. Add the flour, 1/4 cup at a time, beating until the batter is smooth. Add the eggplant and shrimp mixture and fold to mix.

Heat the shortening in a deep pot or deep fryer to 360 degrees. Drop the batter, a heaping tablespoon at a time, into the hot oil. When the beignets pop to the surface, roll them around in the oil to brown them evenly. Drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with the seasoning mix